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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES

BRIEFING

EDITORIAL OPINION

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

EU Gives Date to Turkey For Accession Talks - Sabah  
The Date is October 2005 - Hurriyet  
Turkey Must Recognize Cyprus to Start Talks - Hurriyet  
Kaddafi: "Turkey is Terrorists' Trojan Horse in Europe" -  
Hurriyet  
Conditional Date For Talks - Milliyet  
France/Austria Put Up Obstacles for Turkey - Milliyet  
Date: October 3, 2005; Condition: Recognition of Cyprus -  
Tercuman(DB)  
EU Says 'Yes' to Turkey - Turkiye  
Bargaining in Brussels Focuses on Cyprus Issue - Turkiye  
Annan Steps In - Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS

The Cyprus Knot - Yeni Safak  
Insurgents' Victory in Fallujah - Yeni Safak  
Cyprus Issue Deadlocks Talks - Zaman  
Cyprus Crisis With the EU - Radikal  
Diplomatic War in Brussels - Radikal  
EU Presents Turkey With Tough Conditions - Cumhuriyet  
Annan Plan Reemerges - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

EU Summit in Brussels: All papers report on the conditional date given to Turkey for the beginning of accession talks with the European Union. The summit draft statement provides a date of October 3, 2005 for the talks to begin, with a condition that Turkey recognize Greek Cyprus before that date. While "Turkiye" reports the decision as a success, most other papers interpret it as a disappointment. "Radikal" says the summit been clouded by the demands about Cyprus. "Hurriyet" says that with or without the condition, the outcome of the summit will change life in Turkey. Turkey and the EU reached consensus on all conditions except Cyprus issue, which deadlocked the talks. "Milliyet" reports that PM Erdogan worked all night on the formula offered by the EU and presented his objections to the Netherlands as EU term president. "Sabah" quotes European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso as saying that 'Tonight the EU has opened its door to Turkey. I genuinely believe this is an offer that Turkey should be glad to accept.' "Radikal" quotes Berlusconi as saying that 'one cannot join a club without recognizing all of its members.'

The Turkish Response: "Cumhuriyet" reports that PM Erdogan sent a message to EU leaders saying that Turkey will never take a step forward on issues in a way that would harm the national interest. "Aksam" draws attention to the differing comments about the recognition of Cyprus made by PM Erdogan and FM Gul. Gul said that the direct or indirect recognition of Greek Cyprus is 'out of the question.' About an hour later, Erdogan said that Turkey would carry out the steps dictated by its national interests. "Yeni Safak" drew attention to a message given by Erdogan prior to the summit saying that 'Turkey can cut off talks with the EU if not satisfied with the terms of settlement offer.' Most papers portray the EU as having acted in bad faith on the Cyprus issue, and most commentators write that the Prime Minister should not be blamed if he were to walk out of the talks.

Libyan Leader Kaddafi Comments: Speaking to an Italian radio station, Libyan Leader Muammar Kaddafi said that if Turkey enters the EU, it would become the 'Trojan Horse for terrorists,' including Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden and

other radical Islam groups.

EDITORIAL OPINION: US-EU-Turkey

"The Fallujah Dispute and Silent US Support for EU membership"

Sedat Ergin observed in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (1/17): "Secretary Powell's call to Turkish Foreign Minister to check on developments in the EU process came at a time when Ankara is giving its full attention to the December 17 summit. This shows that Washington is also watching these developments very closely. Similarly, US Ambassador Edelman asked Turkish PM Erdogan last week if 'there is anything we can do prior to the December 17 decision.' Turkey has no objection to US support on the EU, but this suggests that Ankara prefers that the US engage in quiet diplomacy. This suggestion stemmed from past experience, which was rather bitter, when George Bush intervened in the process rather loudly during the Copenhagen summit in December 2002. Things are very different now. Currently, Washington is using its utmost influence through quiet diplomacy and is working for a positive decision from the EU summit. Turkey's gratitude for the American contribution was expressed by Turkish PM Erdogan to Ambassador Edelman during a bilateral meeting on December 13. Interestingly enough, Turkey was experiencing a serious crack in its relationship with the US due to the Fallujah issue just at the time when Turkey's relationship with Europe had taken center stage. Foreign Minister Gul earlier said that Turkey had devoted its full energy to the EU, and mentioned the possibility that Turkey may have 'ignored' the US relationship. Turkish-American ties have gone through a period of turbulence highlighted by PM Erdogan's delaying for 6 weeks in giving an appointment to the US Ambassador Edelman. In last week's meeting, Erdogan managed to put the Turkish-American relationship back on track before leaving for Brussels. Ambassador Edelman handed the PM a file of information and photos in an effort to convince him of the reasons for the US operation in Fallujah. Erdogan reiterated his concerns about civilian losses. Neither side convinced the other. From the American point of view, however, at least the Prime Minister was shown 'the other side of the coin.' In sum, the two sides agreed that criticism needs to be expressed in a way befitting allies, and that these kinds of issues cannot be allowed to cloud the big picture in US-Turkish relations."

EDELMAN